

WASHINGTON, DC - At a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol today, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) and Congressional leaders awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to surviving Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) who served in World War II. The women pilots were recruited during the war for non-combat flight missions, relieving male pilots who were needed for combat duty. Six Maryland women were honored with the group, including Florence Marston from Clinton, MD. A full listing of names and towns of residence is below.

"The Women Airforce Service Pilots bravely answered the call of service when their country was in great need," **stated Congressman Hoyer.** "We honor the service of Ms. Florence Marston and all of the women from our State of Maryland and around the country. After decades of denied recognition, we are proud to recognize them with the Congressional Gold Medal and seal their legacy as national heroes and trail blazers of opportunity for future generations."

A little more than a thousand women earned their wings and were trained as WASPs during World War II, flying a total of 60 million miles of mission flights between September 1942 and December 1944. Over 50 percent of combat aircraft transports within the U.S. during the war were carried out by WASP pilots. Despite their contributions to the war effort, WASPs were not recognized as military veterans until 1977 when the GI Bill Improvement Act granting them full military service was signed into law. President Obama awarded the women with the Congressional Gold Medal on July 1, 2009, which they accepted in the ceremony at the U.S. Capitol today.

Maryland Women Airforce Service Pilots Receiving the Congressional Gold Medal

- Margaret Boylan - Silver Spring, MD
- Scotty Gough - Germantown, MD
- Virginia Hagerstrom - Queenstown, MD
- Elaine Harmon - Silver Spring, MD
- Iola Magruder - Frostburg, MD
- Florence Marston - Clinton, MD

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